VOC FOR IOP/FN
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POLAND'S ETHNIC GERMANS

ANNCR:

THE WEST GERMAN PARLIAMENT HAS APPROVED AGREEMENTS WITH POLAND PAVING THE WAY FOR MIGRATION OF ETHNIC GERMANS. FOR A BACKGROUND REPORT HERE IS VOA CORRESPONDENT MARK HOPKINS.

VOICE:

WARS, MIGRATIONS AND THE CARVING OF EUROPEAN FRONTIERS BY THE VICTORS HAVE SPREAD GERMANS IN A BROAD REGION AMONG EUROPE'S SLAVIC POPULATIONS. THE POLISH-WEST GERMAN AGREEMENTS DEAL WITH SOME OF THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THESE GERMANS. SOME OF THE POLISH ELEMENTS TRACE BACK TO EARLY WARS THAT LEFT GERMANS ON POLAND'S NORTHERN COAST. THEN WORLD WAR TWO AND ITS AFTERMATH, WHICH IN EFFECT MOVED POLAND WESTWARD, GIVING IT PART OF DEFEATED NAZI GERMANY, BROUGHT MORE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF GERMANS UNDER THE POLISH FLAG.

BY THE AGREEMENTS POLAND HAS ACKNOWLEDGED AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED TWENTY TO ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND OF THESE GERMANS WANT TO EMIGRATE, THIS ADDING TO NEARLY SIXTY THOUSAND WHO IN RECENT YEARS ALREADY HAVE RESETTLED IN WEST GERMANY, PLUS SOME SEVEN THOUSAND IN EAST GERMANY.

ASIDE FROM THE CONTROVERSY THAT POLAND IS SELLING PEOPLE -- SINCE POLAND WILL NOW RECEIVE LARGE WEST GERMAN CREDITS -- THERE IS DISPUTE OVER THE NUMBER OF ETHNIC GERMANS WHO WANT TO EMIGRATE. THE WEST GERMAN RED CROSS HAS PUT THE TOTAL AT THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND. THE POLES EARLIER

REJECTED THIS, BUT HAVE NOW IMPLICITLY SAID THAT MORE GERMANS WILL EMIGRATE THAN ORIGINALLY AGREED ON.

THE PROBLEM REACHES BEYOND POLISH BORDERS. WEST GERMAN OFFICIALS CLAIM THAT TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND ETHNIC GERMANS WANT TO LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA. AND IN THE SOVIET UNION, STILL THOUSANDS OF OTHER ETHNIC GERMANS HAVE APPEALED TO EMIGRATE. SOME NUMBER AMONG THE SO-CALLED VOLGA GERMANS WHO MIGRATED TO RUSSIA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DURING THE REIGN OF GERMAN BORN RUSSIAN EMPRESS CATHERINE THE GREAT. OTHER ETHNIC GERMANS ARE LOCATED IN THE BALTIC STATES. SOVIET PHYSICIST ANDREI SAKHAROV HAS SAID THAT SIX THOUSAND FAMILIES -- BETWEEN TWENTY AND TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND ETHNIC GERMANS -- WANT TO EMIGRATE FROM ESTONIA ALONE.

IN ALL THE SOVIET UNION COUNTS ABOUT ONE MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND GERMANS. SOME SIX THOUSAND HAVE BEEN EXITING EVERY YEAR IN A QUIET EMIGRATION. NO ONE KNOWS HOW MANY WANT TO LEAVE. THE SITUATION MAY BE THE SAME AS IN POLAND NOW. IT WILL BE KNOWN HOW MANY ETHNIC GERMANS WANT TO EMIGRATE FROM POLAND WHEN THE EMIGRATION IS FINISHED AND THE NUMBER COUNTED.

JS/PBM